



The Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies

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An Interview with Cardinal Peter Turkson

“I am delighted that you are all here and I am confident that our discussions will be very fruitful and enriching.” These words from Cardinal Turkson, the head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, welcomed scholars to the Vatican Conference organized by the Institute. Over two days, Cardinal Turkson offered his personal reflections on the global financial crisis while encouraging the gathered scholars to speak freely with each other about the Church’s social tradition.

Afterwards, Cardinal Turkson described the Conference as “an excellent opportunity to bring together both academicians and practitioners in the fields of Catholic social doctrine, economics and finance, as well as business sectors at the institutional, non-governmental and governmental levels. The discussions throughout the two-day meeting were rich and engaging, and will

assist the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in its awareness of the prospects and challenges offered by the teaching of Pope Benedict XVI in *Caritas in Veritate*, and specifically in the U.S. context.”



Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, originally from Ghana, serves as the president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace since his appointment by Pope Benedict XVI on October 24, 2009. He had previously served as Archbishop of Cape Coast. He was elevated to the cardinalate by Pope John Paul II in 2003.

When asked why the Council felt comfortable partnering with the Institute for such an event, Cardinal Turkson replied, “The Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies is dedicated to serious reflection on Catholic thought. Its aim is to help all people, through opportunities for careful and focused study on the Catholic intellectual tradition, to come to a greater understanding, and by extension, a greater acceptance of the wisdom, and indeed, the treasure of the Catholic faith and its teachings.” Cardinal Turkson affirmed that the Vatican Conference “was the beginning of a fruitful relationship,” reiterating his “gratitude to Father Jim Heft, SM, Professor Dan Finn, and all those who worked to make the Symposium a success.”

The Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies, located at the University of Southern California, fosters Catholic intellectual and scholarly life. It brings together scholars from across the world in all disciplines who desire to engage in cross-disciplinary, ecumenical, and inter-faith conversation and research that retrieves, critiques, and develops a deeper understanding of the roles of religion and, particularly, Catholicism today.



From the President

Dear Friends of the Institute,

As you will read in this special edition of the Institute Newsletter, the Institute conference hosted by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace succeeded in bringing together scholars and business leaders for a discussion of Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical titled *Caritas in veritate* (Charity in Truth) and its application to economics in the United States. Close to 30 scholars from a variety of leading international academic institutions, research centers, Catholic journals and other print media and business leaders participated. This conference is the direct result of the leadership, dedication, and hard work of Daniel Finn, IACS board member and professor of economics and theology at St. John's University, and Paul Caron, former board member and retired head of J.P. Morgan in Switzerland and Belgium.

Dan and Paul conceived the **True Wealth of Nations (TWN)** research project, nurtured it, gave it birth through an international conference held at USC in 2008, and now continue to develop it into ever greater maturity through this Vatican conference. I couldn't be more pleased, as are a number of others who have offered their impressions in this newsletter. We are thinking through the next step in the TWN project, namely new research on critically important issues regarding the relationship of economics to Catholic social thought.

I want to thank especially John Kusmiersky; Ellen Hancock; Bill and Marcela McKenna; Julie and Tom Condon; and many others for their leadership and generous support of this conference. Without their generosity, these extraordinary initiatives would not have been possible. I also would like to recognize the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace for providing this extraordinary opportunity and Cardinal Turkson for his friendship, leadership, and generosity.

Sincerely,

Father James L. Heft, S.M.
President

A Message from the Cardinal Secretary of State, the Holy See

Cardinal Tarcisio Pietro Evasio Bertone, S.D.B.
Secretary of State and Camerlengo



SECRETARIAT OF STATE

FROM THE VATICAN 11 October 2010

No. 157.170

Your Eminence,

The Holy Father is pleased to greet you, together with Bishop Toso and all those who have travelled to Rome to participate in the Symposium entitled "*Caritas in Veritate* and the United States". He is grateful to Father James Heft, SM, of the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies of the University of Southern California, and to Professor Daniel Finn of St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, as well as to all those in the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace who helped organize this important event.

Recent global events have reminded us of the importance of sustained Christian reflection on the nature and goal of economic life in the United States and throughout the world....

With these sentiments, the Holy Father is pleased to entrust your work to the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and he willingly imparts his Apostolic Blessing to all participants as a pledge of grace and peace.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Secretary of State

A Window Into the Work of the Institute

For two days in October, the Vatican Conference on *Caritas in veritate* offered a glimpse into the Institute's unique role within the Church. Scholars from different disciplines and Christian faiths reflected on the pope's latest encyclical as it applies to the United States. The participants said that they came to a deeper understanding of the global crisis and a greater sense of hope for the relevance of such informed dialogue about the challenges confronting the Church and world.

A cornerstone of the Institute's many conferences and books is a commitment to interreligious dialogue. During the Vatican Conference, participants of other religious traditions encouraged honest conversation about areas of agreement and difference. Ruth Groenhout, a philosopher in the Christian Reformed tradition at Calvin College, stated, "I'm



Participants of the Vatican Conference



Paul Caron, former Institute Trustee; Fr. James L. Heft, S.M., Institute President; and Dr. Daniel Finn, Institute Trustee

very sympathetic [to the challenges of religious diversity]—I'm wrestling with some of the same issues that the Catholic Church is wrestling with on these things." Rebecca Blank, the Undersecretary of Economic Affairs for the Department of Commerce, has worked with numerous civic and religious groups throughout her scholarly and public career. As the conference came to a close, Dr. Blank commented, "I would hope that this is something that the Institute would continue to pursue because I think that dialogue across and among people of faith with common concerns can open up avenues into other conversations within larger political groups, within private market groups, and within other parts of civil society."

Through its location at the University of Southern California, and its connections to scholars in numerous disciplines throughout the world, the Institute is dedicated to the enrichment of the thought and life of the Catholic Church. Bishop

William Murphy of Rockville Center (NY), a longtime leader in the American Church and Chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development of the USCCB, had never heard of the Institute before he was invited to the conference. "When I got the invitation I had to Google it!", he recalled. Part of his responsibility is to address social and economic issues in the United States. "The Conference," he said gratefully, "has given me a new set of people that I know and can interact with."

An enthusiastic supporter and board member of the Institute, Thomas Condon believes that "the Vatican symposium surpassed our expectations by encouraging lively, spirited discussion of pressing social issues." Merle Mullin added that "the symposium demonstrated the power that dialogue has to bring about change and growth."

The Vatican Conference was both an important event in itself and a sign of how the Institute will proceed with future projects. After following the two-day scholarly exchange closely, Julie Condon aptly concluded that "the symposium was a fantastic opportunity to see diligent efforts of the Institute come to fruition in the very home of the Catholic Church."



Fr. James Heft, S.M., Institute President, and Cardinal Peter Turkson



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Impressions of the Conference

“This conference was the beginning of a fruitful relationship.”

Cardinal Peter Turkson, President, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

“The presence of the Institute, which is committed to bringing people together and engaging them on these issues, is important.”

Dr. Rebecca Blank, Undersecretary of Economic Affairs, Department of Commerce

“This has given me a new set of people that I know and can interact with.”

Bishop William Murphy, Chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, USCCB

“This symposium was a testament to the vitally important role of the Institute in helping Catholicism become a real player in working for the common good in the twenty-first century.”

Peter Mullin, Institute Trustee

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